

MESSENGER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER & PRAYER GUIDE



"We are beautifully and wonderfully made" handprints from summer 2026 migrant ed youth, ages 5-18 yrs. PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR

GOOD WORK, HAND IN HAND by Paul Daigle

"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion ..."
—Philippians 1:4–6

By noon, the linoleum tables inside McCaskey High School are crowded with a gallery of preschool palms and almost-grown hands. A hand lies flat against the paper, a radiating anchor of heat on a humid July afternoon. The pencil rounds the thumb, climbs each finger, dips through the narrow valleys between them, then closes the gray perimeter at the wrist. The hand lifts. Its outline remains: graphite evidence of four ancient words—*fearfully and*

wonderfully made.

Another hand takes its place. By the end of the activity, the tables hold outline after outline, each unmistakably its own.

They belong to local migrant, refugee, and immigrant students in Millersville University's Migrant Education Program, which provides summer academic instruction to more than 100 children and youth, from preschool through high school. The peculiar thing about leaving a mark, though, is its indifference to direction. The hand pressed to the page is not necessarily the only thing being marked.

For the sixth summer, EMM's Kingdom Teams partnered with Millersville University's Migrant

Education Program. Among the traced hands were those of middle- and high-school students who arrived Monday for Kingdom Teams, EMM's one-week summer mission experience hosted in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Each morning begins with discipleship and education on global missions. By lunch, participants are beside Migrant Education students; afternoons move through STEAM projects, art, sports, and group games. Elsewhere in the week, they prepare and serve meals alongside local ministries and learn the practical art of prayer walking through urban environments such as Lancaster City.

Because EMM intentionally de-

signed this program for young people, rigorous learning is balanced with fun, food, and community building. Each week offers a hands-on invitation into missional discipleship and cross-cultural service—five days of stepping outside familiar places and into what Kingdom Teams calls *God's unfinished story*.

One youth leader reflected that “traditional mission trips expose students to a single culture. Kingdom Teams opened my students’ eyes to people representing more than thirty countries”—without ever leaving the United States. Another described watching his youth step into active service and grow in real time as “one of the most significant experiences of my own faith journey”. The vast geography of global mission compressed itself to the precise width of a lunch table.

For more than a month each summer, EMM Kingdom Teams welcome new youth groups week by week. Sometimes one congregation fills the week; sometimes two smaller groups share it. This summer, two congregations separated by more than three hours of highway arrived on Monday without knowing one another.

Their youth served, played, and worshiped side by side; their leaders found one another over morning coffee and, before the week ended, were already penciling joint events into calendars for the coming year. Friday would send them home, but there was already evidence of partnership: two congregations that had arrived separately were leaving with plans that required each other.

Permanence is difficult to judge on Friday. Years later, it becomes harder to miss—particularly when it walks back into McCaskey carrying newly hatched chicks. Brandon Bixler, now a McCaskey teacher, led an interactive workshop on the life cycle

of chickens. The newly hatched chicks passed carefully into waiting hands as he explained the progression from egg to bird.

Years earlier, Brandon had arrived at Kingdom Teams as a high school student himself. He credits that experience with sparking his passion for teaching at McCaskey and serving immigrant youth—a remarkable consequence of his church youth group signing up for five days with EMM’s Kingdom Teams. The children held the newest stage of his lesson in their palms. Brandon, standing before them, had brought the rest of the life cycle with him.

Brandon, however, was not the only lasting EMM imprint to surface in Kingdom Teams this summer. After her time with EMM’s Advance program, Ana moved to Lancaster to live on mission while pursuing vocational training. This summer, her path through EMM converged with Kingdom Teams, where she led worship one evening each week, gathering a roomful of young voices into a common song.

The singing continued at Habecker Mennonite Church, where EMM’s Kingdom Teams joined Habecker to pilot a new Anabaptist, missional VBS curriculum. Chris and Dawn Landes’ enthusiasm for serving across cultures proved contagious: Habecker youth led crafts and activities; Kingdom Teams led teaching and music; children from a congregation filled with refugee families supplied the chorus. “Jesus Loves Me” rose in English, Spanish, and Karen—three languages carrying one unvarnished truth: *All People Need to Know Jesus Loves Them!*

A week like this requires careful composition, with dozens of details Kingdom Teams coordinates so youth leaders can spend the week leading their youth rather than managing it. As one youth pastor summarized, “You handle all the

logistics—from housing, to food, to the service projects, to the teaching—and I get to just BE with my youth and connect with them.” One student wanted the week to extend beyond Friday, “I want every day to feel like it did at Kingdom Teams ... purposeful, meaningful, and on mission.”

As summer cools, that wish finds an unlikely shape in a photograph: a gallery of paper palms, each outline unmistakably its own—a living blueprint. What begins as an open hand traced on paper becomes, by the time it lifts from the page, a posture for mission—reaching past the familiar, getting down to work; lowered in surrender, lifted in worship, extended across difference and carrying the Good News as only these fearfully, wonderfully particular hands can.

The gray boundary of five fleeting days closes at the wrist, and the good work carries on—toward completion by the One who began it.

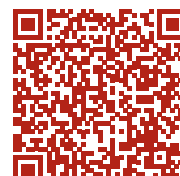
Another summer is already taking shape. EMM is accepting applications for Kingdom Teams 2027, with two weeks already fully reserved. There is still room for more youth groups to join in “partnership in the gospel,” placing the Great Commission in the hands of the next generation as they find their place in God’s unfinished story.

To reserve a week or learn more, visit emm.org/kteams.



Paul Daigle is the director of EMM's Kingdom Teams.

**Register for Summer 2027
Kingdom Teams**



OCTOBER DAILY PRAYER

WEST AFRICA

- 1 | Pray for the Deaf community in the Gambia, who are severely underresourced and face systemic barriers. Pray for provision for them, and for them to hear from the Lord in ways that are significant to them.
- 2 | Ask the Lord to call individuals and families to serve short-term in West Africa.
- 3 | Pray for the Badyara people in Guinea-Bissau, of whom 79% are adherent to the Muslim faith. Pray that they would have meaningful encounters with Christ that speak to their hearts.
- 4 | Pray for the Bambara in the Gambia, of whom over 80% are adherent to the Muslim faith. Many also participate in traditional religious practices. Pray that Christ would be illumined to them as savior.
- 5 | Ask the Lord to call individuals and families to serve long-term in West Africa.

LANCASTER, PA

- 6 | Ask the Lord to sustain and encourage those who volunteer with Neighbors Community Center at Hub450, our building in Lancaster City, Pa. Ask the Lord to prompt more volunteers to serve.
- 7 | Ask the Lord to fill the open EMM staff position for a recruitment and placement specialist.
- 8 | Please pray for Linda and Phil Gottschalk as they begin teaching this month online for the Baptist Theological Institute in Bucharest, Romania. Linda will teach two courses on the survey of church history: one for master's students and one for first-year bachelor's students. Phil will teach survey of theology to master's students, history of Christian thought to second year bachelor students, and Christian ethics to fourth year bachelor students. Pray also for Phil as he assumes new roles with the Christian-Muslim Relations Team.
- 9 | Pray for the refugee and immigrant community living in Lancaster, Pa. Pray for God's provision for them, and for their businesses to thrive.
- 10 | Pray for a partnership-building opportunity for EMM this morning. Pray that this interaction will yield meaningful outcomes of prayer, connection, and shared vision.

- 11 | Pray for the '26-'27 Advance cohort as they engage in the discipleship training phase of the program in Lancaster, Pa. Pray that they would learn well and receive from God what he has for them in this time of learning and growth. Pray for them to engage meaningfully with the Kairos course, and for the Kairos class cohort to gain insight from that opportunity.

CENTRAL ASIA

- 12 | Join Elizabeth* in prayer for her and her team as they host a team of 8 people from 5 countries in their city for a prayer and service tour of the region.
- 13 | Ask the Lord to call individuals and families to serve long-term in Central Asia.
- 14 | Pray for the Chenchen people in Kazakhstan, of whom 85% are adherents to Islam. Pray for the Lord to reveal Christ to them in ways that are compelling to them.
- 15 | Pray for Evan and Faith* as they settle in Central Asia. Pray for provision for their needs, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, as well as meaningful confirmations of God's sovereignty in the timing of their arrival to the region.
- 16 | Ask the Lord to call individuals and families to serve short-term in Central Asia.

CENTRAL EUROPE

- 17 | Join Nick* in prayer for proficiency as he learns both Russian and Farsi, so that he can interact meaningfully with the many speakers of those languages in the context in which he ministers.
- 18 | Ask the Lord to call individuals and families to serve long-term in Central Europe.
- 19 | Pray for the Vietnamese population living in the Czech Republic. Pray that the 5-10% of the group who are Christians would reach out to others in their group, 53% of whom are Buddhists. Pray for meaningful opportunities for those who are Christ-followers to connect with others.
- 20 | Ask the Lord to call individuals and families to serve short-term in Central Europe.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- 21 | Ask the Lord to call individuals and families to serve short-term in Southeast Asia.
- 22 | Join Brody and Abigail* in prayer as they get closer to their departure date. As they prepare to leave for Thailand at the beginning

of November, ask the Lord to provide what their family needs during this transitional period.

- 23 | Pray for the Brao people in Cambodia, many of whom follow ethnic religions. Pray that the 5-10% of their group who follow Christ would be bold and courageous to share with others the truth they have found.

- 24 | Join John and Jeanette Puckett in praising the Lord that their language abilities are growing and for the good health they have been experiencing.

- 25 | Ask the Lord to call individuals and families to serve long-term in Southeast Asia.

OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

- 26 | Pray for Peter and Christy* and their family as they adjust to life in Beirut, Lebanon. Pray for good friendships for their children at the French school. Pray also for a meaningful first semester at the Near East School of Theology for Peter, teaching contemporary issues in Christian ethics this term. Ask the Lord for continued strength in learning Lebanese Arabic and in acclimating to life in a big city. There are over 42,000 people per square mile in their neighborhood!
- 27 | Join Carissa Sherer in praying for Hope for Home, the ministry she works with in Guatemala. Ask that God would use a challenging season to further glorify God and draw ministry workers closer to Him as they increase in trust.
- 28 | Pray for the All-nations Association of Bible Schools (AABS) video conference for their six affiliated schools in India/Bangladesh on November 10th. Pray for good attendance, a stable internet connection, and good fellowship among these Bible school directors, and that they will benefit from teaching on practical pointers on how to run a Bible school.
- 29 | Pray that God will call youth who are gifted in leadership to apply to serve during the 2027 summer Kingdom teams season.
- 30 | Pray that the Lord would begin to put Advance on the hearts of young people, and that they would feel prompted by Him to apply for the 2027-2028 Advance year.
- 31 | Pray that the upcoming EMM vision and fundraising banquets would be meaningful times of connection and inspiration for those who attend.

Some prayer requests adapted from joshuaproject.net.

**Names changed or omitted for sensitivity reasons.*



Eastern Mennonite Missions

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Lancaster, PA 17604-8617 US

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Behold

I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR

- Revelation 3:8

November 12th — Double Tree, Lancaster, Pa

December 3rd — Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa

February 17th — SCC, Sarasota, Fl

REGISTER AT
EMM.ORG/BANQUET

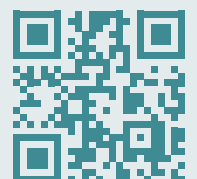


EMM VISION & FUNDRAISING BANQUET

When you support EMM's Impact Fund, you enable us to recruit, equip, and send EMM workers around the world.

\$1,111,405 RECEIVED
AS OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

\$1,645,000
2026 IMPACT FUND GOAL



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